

*Opposition to Enrique Moreno Nomination*

Q. Why do you think the two Texas Senators—did they reject your nominee because he's Hispanic, Mexican-American?

*The President.* There are only two conceivable alternatives, I think. That or they just don't want to confirm any judges unless they're rightwing ideologists. I mean, this man had unbelievable academic credentials. He was endorsed by every conceivable professional association. He was consistent with the judges I've appointed for over 7 years now, highly qualified and clearly in the mainstream of the American judiciary.

But you know, they like judges that are more results oriented, and it may be that they just want to use this opportunity to try to seize control of the judiciary again. For them, it's all too often a political arm of the Government. But to do this to a Hispanic judge from Texas, who has made himself into an excellent lawyer and a superbly qualified person is just unconscionable. I mean, it's unbelievable.

If their committee didn't find this man qualified, I'd certainly be interested in knowing what the criteria of their committee is.

Q. But you're not charging that two U.S. Senators are prejudiced against Hispanics, are you?

*The President.* No, I'm saying that—you have to ask them, and people can draw their own conclusions. They may or may not be. But since he's clearly well-qualified and everybody virtually in the world with an opinion has endorsed

him, if it's not that, it's that they want somebody who's more politically malleable.

As I said, all you have to do is look at the way so many of their judges perform. They're highly results oriented when they appoint judges. I just try to appoint people I thought would be fair and interpret the law and be balanced and represent this country. So it might be politics and ideology. But it's a terrible, terrible day for the Hispanic community and for the idea of fairness in the judiciary.

Q. What's this going to do—[inaudible]—election, Mr. President?

*The President.* I don't know. I don't have a comment on that. I'd rather—to me this is—I made this appointment; this man was qualified on the merits, superbly qualified. And he's from a State with a huge Hispanic population and a big caseload, and he deserved a hearing, and he deserved to be confirmed. I think it's just disgraceful.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 12:15 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, prior to his departure for Fayetteville, AR. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams; and Enrique Moreno, nominee for U.S. Court of Appeals Judge for the Fifth Circuit. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Statement on Opposition to the Nomination of Enrique Moreno

May 6, 2000

Senators Gramm and Hutchison announced yesterday that they opposed the confirmation of Enrique Moreno, my nominee for a Texas vacancy on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Their claim that he lacks the necessary experience to serve on the fifth circuit is unconscionable. The American Bar Association, which has rated judicial nominees for Republican and Democratic Presidents since the Eisenhower administration, unanimously gave Moreno their highest rating. The son of Mexican-American immigrants and a graduate of Harvard Law School, Moreno was rated one of

the top three trial attorneys in El Paso by State judges.

In rejecting Moreno's candidacy, the Texas Senators have ignored the strong endorsement of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic National Bar Association, and local law enforcement officials. This is not the first time that the Texas Senators have rejected an exceptional Hispanic candidate for this seat, which has been vacant for more than 3 years. Jorge Rangel was forced to withdraw after the Texas Senators refused to allow action on his nomination. By blocking qualified judicial

*May 6 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000*

nominees, Gramm and Hutchison have exacerbated the vacancy crisis on the fifth circuit. Their unjustifiable opposition to Enrique

Moreno—an exceptionally well-qualified Hispanic judicial nominee—must not be allowed to stand.

## Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

*May 6, 2000*

I want to join Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern in welcoming the IRA's commitment to initiate a process that will completely and verifiably put arms beyond use and its decision to resume contact with the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning. This is a significant step toward realizing the full promise of the Good Friday accord. I urge the loyalist paramilitaries to do the same.

I express appreciation to Martti Ahtisaari and Cyril Ramaphosa for their willingness to take part in confidence-building measures involving third party inspection of IRA weapons dumps.

I have great confidence in their ability to contribute to this important task.

These developments offer renewed hope to the people of Northern Ireland that politics will once and for all be pursued through exclusively political means. The United States remains ready to assist this process in any way we can.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland; and former Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa's African National Congress.

## Remarks at a Reception for Hillary Clinton in Little Rock, Arkansas

*May 7, 2000*

Thank you very much. Vic, thank you for being here. Marion, thank you for being here. Vic Snyder was one of the bravest people in the Arkansas State Senate when I was Governor. When he ran for Congress, I told Hillary, I said, "I'm afraid he can't get elected. He's got too much guts. He'll say what he thinks about everything." But he got elected, and he got re-elected. And I thank—when Marion Berry ran for Congress after doing a stint in our administration in the Agriculture Department, Dale and David and I really felt that he was entitled to be in Congress, almost as a conciliation prize for having hosted us at the coon supper in Gillette all those years. Anybody who could get us to eat coon for 10 or 15 years in a row should be given a seat in Congress, just as a matter of course. But I thank them so much.

The other night, when I was home a couple of weeks ago—or maybe it was last week—to dedicate the law school here to Bill Bowen and to do the event in honor of our friend Daisy

Bates, Dale and David and I went to dinner alone, just the three of us. And we needed adult supervision. *[Laughter]* If there were a tape of the conversation we had—we relived everything we had ever done together, and amplified it all in an unconscionable way. I don't know when I've had as much fun. And Barbara, you should have been there to give us a little civilizing influence, but we had a good time.

Today mostly is a day for us that is full of sentiment and gratitude. I want to thank you for all you've done for us over the years. I want to thank you for things large and small when I was Governor and for backing us in the two times I ran for President. Yesterday I did have a chance to travel the backroads of Logan and Franklin and Madison and Washington and Benton Counties and to relive my first race for Congress in 1974. We went to Stephanie Streett's wedding in the beautiful chapel in Subiaco. I thought about all my old